



Emphasizing the Positive Gets Results in Occ Med Sales

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A successful occupational health sales professional should develop a mechanism to monitor his or her choice of words and commit to using the English language to the mutual advantage of both the provider and the sales prospects.

However, sales professionals often make poor word choices at critical moments.

Negative words abound in our daily vocabulary. Frequently used negative words include *bad*, *poor*, *problem*, *complication*, *unacceptable*, and *difficult*. When calling on an occupational medicine prospect, these words should be replaced with positive words such as *opportunity*, *success*, *improvement*, *progress*, etc.

Inappropriate words tend to fall into two categories: calling attention to a negative and exhibiting uncertainty. Both tendencies can be overcome by proactively focusing on positive, active words.

A common error is to assume the other party is already aware of a negative. For example, one might point out that “our parking problems have now been resolved,” when the prospect had no idea there was ever a parking problem in the first place.

“Exhibiting uncertainty” may be exemplified by treading too lightly with overly passive statements, such as:

“Is it possible that...?”
“Perhaps...”
“Can we...?”
“Is it okay if...?”
“Do you think...?”

Instead, a firm, positive demeanor should reign. For example, “Is it possible for me to meet with your CFO to get a bet-

ter handle on your real costs?” is better posed as “We find that meeting with a company’s CFO provides us with an opportunity to better focus on your unique experience.”

Several other basic rules will help keep interactions positive:

- **Respect your prospect.** There is a narrow line between criticizing a company and calling attention to its shortcomings in a graceful manner. Rather than “your injury rate exceeds the national norm,” advise that “it appears there is a real opportunity to make a difference in your workers’ comp expenses.”

Never *tell* a prospect that they should do something; rather, *suggest* that they do something. While you are at it, look for and tell the prospect what they are doing right. To quote Dale Carnegie, “Offer honest and sincere appreciation whenever possible.”

Finally, get to the point and respect a prospect’s time. At the outset, confirm how much time the prospect has for you and stick to their preferred time frame.

- **Qualify your suggestions.** Qualify anything that is not a fact with phrases such as “in my opinion,” or “from my perspective.” You cover yourself should you be wrong, and offer an appreciated dose of humility.
- **Nothing is guaranteed.** Do not “guarantee” anything. You are better off telling the prospect “although we *cannot guarantee* that we will lower your lost work time, we believe our focus will provide your company with the greatest likelihood of making a difference.”
- **Develop a standard opening.** You have only a few seconds to generate a good first impression. Those seconds should be carefully crafted and made into a routine. Be firm, confident, respectful, and to the point.
- **Develop a standard summary statement.** The most important thing someone says is invariably what they say as they are “walking out the door.” The statement should reflect your competitive advantage and desire to work with your prospect’s company.



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sure that you are aware that intimate partner violence is much more prevalent than reported. Hopefully, you are thinking, "What can urgent care physicians do about this epidemic besides providing empathetic patient care?"

Since 1997, a group of urgent care centers has been providing free, no-questions-asked care to patients and children residing in shelters housing victims of IPV.

Why is this important?

The most dangerous time for victims of IPV is when they leave the relationship. Abusers will go to great lengths to hunt down their victims in an effort to control the situation or silence their accuser. Submitting a claim to the perpetrator's insurance plan makes tracking down the victim much easier.

These altruistic urgent care owners have set up a call-ahead service with the shelters, which allows the patients to bypass the lobby and walk right in through the back door for their care. The patients are registered in the exam room, no insurance claim is submitted, and no payment is demanded. The patient or her children are treated, the care is documented, and the patient leaves through the back door.

It is time for us to step up to the plate and positively impact the lives of countless victims and their children.

A Challenge

Here is what I would challenge you to do: Contact the IPV shelters in your area to facilitate a no-charge, no-questions-asked care policy for their residents. Believe me, you will not be overwhelmed with patients and the care and empathy you provide these unfortunate victims will help them get back on their feet.

If 5,000 urgent care centers treat just one victim of IPV per day, we will impact the lives of 1.8 million patients per year.

Many of these women and children fleeing from their homes deny themselves medical care for fear their partner will either find them or they will incur debts they are unable to repay.

As urgent care centers, let us come together to address this too-silent epidemic and remove one barrier from their path to independence and freedom from fear.

Use this opportunity to show your staff and your community that the service you provide to the temporarily disenfranchised is as important to you as your bottom line.

Please e-mail me at jjs@shufeldtlaw.com and I will do whatever I can to help you achieve this goal. Your efforts will also be acknowledged in future issues of *JUCM*. ■

REFERENCES

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Out with the Negative, in with the Positive

Old phrasing: We hope to work with you.

New phrasing: We believe that we can make a real difference in your workplace health and safety.

Old phrasing: We specialize in addressing your health and safety problems.

New phrasing: We specialize in working with employers to enhance the health and safety of their workforce.

Old phrasing: You can reduce lost work time by developing a strong pre-placement screening program.

New phrasing: We find that companies like yours often reduce total lost work time by developing a strong pre-placement screening program.

Old phrasing: If you work with us, we will reduce your total workers' compensation costs by at least 10%.

New phrasing: We feel confident that we can reduce your total workers' compensation costs by 10% or more.

Old phrasing: You should develop a drug-testing program.

New phrasing: In my opinion, you should develop a drug-testing program

Old phrasing: Is it possible to schedule an orientation meeting with your first-line supervisors next week?

New phrasing: We find that an orientation meeting with first-line supervisors is a critical first step in developing a productive relationship with our employer clients.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESSES

Have you instituted an effective occupational medicine program, or devised a particularly successful sales and marketing campaign? Let us know. Describe what you've done to strengthen your occupational medicine services, either clinically or from a practice management perspective, in an e-mail to editor@jucm.com. We'll share your success stories in an upcoming issue of *JUCM*.